

The Sufficiency of God's Grace

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I. Introduction.

A. Jerry reviews lessons on grace and spiritual disciplines as a means of appropriating God's blessings.

B. Our relationship with God is not based on our performance, but on Jesus' performance in our place.

II. God's grace not only the unmerited favor of God through the work of Jesus, but also the strength of God made available to us by the Holy Spirit within us. (2 Corinthians 12:1ff)

A. This help that the Spirit provides to us is a tangible expression of God's favor. (Philippians 4:16)

B. All pain in our lives has a purpose from God. He trains us through hardship. (2 Corinthians 12:7; Hebrews 12:6-7; Ephesians 6:4; Lamentations 3:33)

C. God did not remove Paul's thorn. His life was characterized by hardship, but this thorn was unusually difficult. (1 Corinthians 1:8, 6:3-10, 11:23-28, 12:8)

1. The reason that God did not remove the thorn was not because pride would continue to be an issue, but because He was teaching Paul to rely on His strength.

2. God's grace assumes our weakness and inability and is opposed to self-sufficiency.

D. One of the greatest truths we must learn as Christians is that without God, we can do nothing. (John 15:5)

1. We tend to rely on our spiritual gifts and our own discipline. (Deuteronomy 8:2ff, 17ff)

2. Sometimes, God gives us a "thorn in the flesh" so that we are aware of our dependence on God.

E. God's grace is adequate for us and we can find contentment in His sufficiency. (2 Corinthians 12:9; 1 Timothy 6:8)

F. We tend to abhor weakness, but Paul glories in his weakness so that God's power can be displayed in his life.

Application questions:

1. What is your attitude toward weaknesses in your lives? Do you abhor them or see them as opportunities for a display of God's strength?

2. How have you seen God train you through hardship?

3. What are your culture's views on self-sufficiency? What is God's? Which has more influence in the way you think and act on a daily basis?
